Communication January 26, 2020

Dear Mason Patriots,

The University is aware of reports regarding a Mason student returning from China who is exhibiting symptoms similar to those of the novel coronavirus you may have heard about in the news. This information is being shared on social media and communicated within social and academic networks at Mason.

Today the [Virginia Department of Health (VDH) issued a statement](https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/) confirming three residents in the Commonwealth who meet the criteria for testing for possible infection with the 2019 Novel Coronavirus. VDH and the local health departments involved are working in close collaboration, along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to complete testing on these cases as quickly as possible. For more information about the coronavirus please visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 2019 Novel Coronavirus Website](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html).

There is a possibility that these illnesses are not due to the coronavirus but may instead be a cold, flu, or other illness. While VDH awaits test results on these individuals, public health will work closely with these patients and anyone who was in close contact with them to ensure monitoring and precautionary measures are put in place to prevent the spread of illness. To protect confidentiality, specific details about these patients will not be provided.

Because other Mason community members and residents of Northern Virginia may also have traveled to China recently, public health officials strongly encourage everyone to continue practicing good hygiene and general precautions to prevent the spread of all communicable diseases:

- Do not attend classes, work, or university events when sick. Stay home except when seeking medical care and avoid contact with others.
- Seek medical care right away if you experience symptoms, such as fever, cough or difficulty breathing.
- Before you go to Student Health Services, doctor’s office, or emergency room, call ahead and inform the clinic about your recent travel and symptoms. Follow the instructions of medical care providers to get the care you need while keeping others safe.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

The university will provide updates on this situation as information becomes available. Thank you for doing your part to protect the health of our community.

Respectfully,